

THE GREATEST INVENTOR— A LAWBREAKER



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BY "JOCK" BELLAIRS.

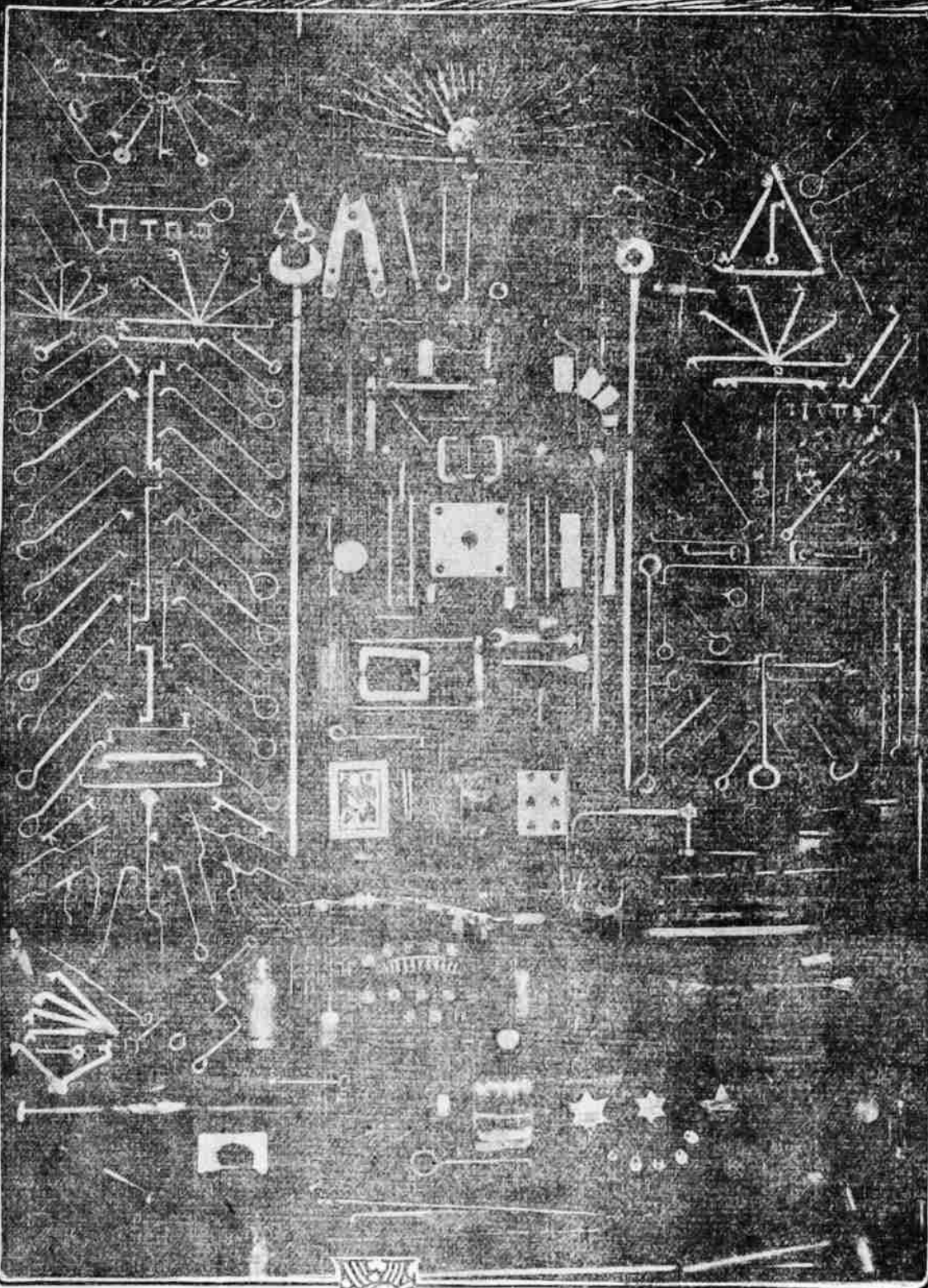
Once, at a gathering of great thief takers, in the course of a national convention of Chiefs of Police, a detective had remarked that the artifices of the first-class criminal baffled belief. To which, William A. Pinkerton, head of the Pinkerton National Detective Agency made instant response:

"There is one real Edison in society. There are thousands of possible Edisons immersed in various prisons of the world or at large, hiding from the bloodhounds of the law."

Which tersely gives one an idea of the wonderful fertility of the

partment in the world.

The other day, a thousand men in the St. Louis police department craved opportunity to inspect a giant "can opener." This had been used to open the safe in a downtown restaurant and it had done its work so completely that the safe was a useless hunk of junk and had yielded to the "Johnson men," the sum of \$825. This "can opener" was a "duck bill jimmy." The tool suddenly appeared in Eastern United States about a year or two ago. The first one was in sections so that by a system of bolts it could be taken apart in very short time and carried in sections in the pocket. When pieced together it was four feet long. It was capable of moving a huge section of the



Making of Devices to Wreck "Burglar Proof"

Safes, Pick Locks and Saw Bars, Requires More Skill Than Honorable Work.

is the proper tempering. This is an art that few understand. Safe makers, every day, seek some alloy that will enable such boxes as they turn out, to resist the attacks of the safe cracker. And just as ardently the safe cracker seeks the means of getting into the safe.

"Biddle" Houlihan, now doing a 17-year-term in Atlanta, Ga., has been credited with knowing more about the art of making safe breaking devices than any man alive.

this only after he had been sentenced to ten years. John Ryan and Chardley Downer, postoffice burglars and bank robbers, enriched many collections.

It must not be presumed that skeleton keys, jimmies, glass and putty removers, drills, in fact, all the articles enumerated in the foregoing are solely the burglars' stock in trade. He has a "bur" or file that is a saw combination itself. He has a powder pipe used original-



draw pins from railroad ties
TOOLS MADE WITHIN
WALLS OF PRISON.

While it took a most fertile mind to give safe breakers this weapon, and thus escape the necessity and the danger of using explosives, the tool is paltry compared to thousands of other "first aids to the crook." It would seem that such a paltry trade would deter men from the making. Bless you, the finest tools in many of the collections have been made under the most daring circumstances, under the noses of guards in the penitentiaries.

There are so many different tools used by criminals that it would take a book to describe or name them all. At one time there was such a thing as a diamond nipper, a small, pin-like affair used to sneak a diamond out of your tie while you were looking. Nowadays a new paper and long deft fingers do that little thing. There is, in nine-tenths of the tool collections in the country, a diamond nipper and it is one of the nine curiosities. This tool originated in the penitentiary.

In the "burglars' tool" collection which was one of the greatest attractions at the Louisiana Purchase Exposition, there are two "fans" of skeleton keys. These keys, if we may describe them as such, are perhaps the finest set in the world. They may be termed a series of matrices something on the order of the Linotype matrix, and these fit into a slender holder which correspond to the body of a key. In this collection there is a key for every lock in the world. No dog or set of dogs in any known lock could resist them. And quite by accident they came into the hands of the police before the maker had a chance to get them out, perhaps to earn a royalty of \$5 for his skill.

Joe Lyons made them. Joe, if we are to believe some of the detective yarns, was just about as good a burglar as the world ever knew.

CENTER—A case of burglar's tools collected by the police. Lower left—A safe wrecked with a duck-bill jimmy. Lower right—The duck-bill jimmy.

He was not Bill Sykes. The latter was a brute. Joe Lyons relied on cunning. Sykes and a few more of his kind furnish the moving picture burglar.

The real burglar will run the moment he knows something or some one is stirring in the house. He is not looking for trouble and wants none. He is seldom, if ever, armed. Only the desperado resorts to violence. Cry "fire" if you know there is a burglar about and the result will make you laugh. Joe Lyons was one of the cunning sort, sans any sort of bad temper. He had served five terms when the prison at Jefferson City got him. He was well towards the end of his term when the warden decided to put another prisoner in the cell with Joe. The look of disgust that swept over Joe's face when he heard this, apprised the guards that something was wrong and the cell was searched. In a niche they found the set of keys, a set that makes every mechanic who views them, wonder at the capability of the brain that reasoned them out and the aptitude of the hands that fashioned them.

**"OUTSIDER" DETIES
KEY IN A DOOR.**
But Joe's keys are only a lot in the collections. Once it was the belief that a burglar was easily circumvented by leaving the door key in the lock. That was wasted wisdom. In most collections there is a queer little device taken from this or that burglar. And some collec-

tions have a dozen or more, different sizes and of odd shapes. These are mainly fashioned exactly like a woman's curling iron. The difference is stability in the tool you see in the police cases. This little thing is called an "outsider." A burglar who had run foul of half a dozen "keys-left-in-the-lock-cries" reasoned a remedy and the "outsider" was the result. It is inserted in the outside keyhole, grips the rounded end of the key, pressed firmly about it, endwise, much the same as a woman grips her hair in the curling iron, and the key is turned as neatly as though it had been left on the outside for the benefit of the burglar.

A glass cutter, a putty cutter, a jimmy are simple. Only these are hundreds of jimmies and these tell the firmest of locks. Frank Lorie, ex-convict, is credited with being the first maker of the "come-along." This is a safe-breaking device. It is formed of a plate to which is attached four legs, bits of iron six inches long. In the center is a hole. A screw runs through this. One end of the screw is firmly attached to a steel hand, or pair of fingers. These fit around the combination knob of a safe. The screw runs through the hole and on the outside is a nut. A big wrench turns this nut and as it winds around the screw it pulls the through the plate and the knob must "come along." The fine work of this is its noiselessness. There is another sort of "come-along." It is gripped much the same, but assists in the holding of a hand drill. By means of this a hole is drilled through the combination, either for the throwing of the dogs or the use of powder or nitroglycerin. This latter is variously known as "soup," "oil" or "grease." It is becoming out of date. The "can opener," "come-along," and even the cold chisel and hammer have superseded it. In these drills, the secret

"Billy" Pinkerton, for one, once said "Bld" knew more about getting into a safe without the use of explosives than the men who made the safes. And this is true. He, like other criminal tool makers, was intended for a mechanic, and instead of following Edisonward, he went the other way. Jim French, once the oracle of several chiefs of police, is considered a good tool maker. Jim will leave the Leavenworth Federal Prison in May. He "fell" after a postoffice job in Texas.

But of all the expert tool makers, so far as "burglars' tools" are concerned, and strangely, all tools taken from criminals are classed as burglars' outfits, none compared to an old German who was generally believed to hail from an Illinois town. This man's name was never positively known. Neither could the police ever learn where he belonged. But burglar after burglar, found with a good kit, was willing to say they were "tools."

**BURGARS SHUN
ELECTRIC ALARMS.**

Jerome Markle alias "Dutch Weber" had very nearly the finest safe kit ever taken from a prisoner. They got him in Detroit some years ago. His outfit included "brads," a fine spun bit of steel fashioned to open or widen cracks in the safe door that "soup" might be poured; "taps," a delicate little thing to tap away the enamel that a drill might be started in the door; braces, bits, jimmy, oil, fuse, even down to plans of various makes of safes. Jimmy said he made most of the tools himself. But he boasted

ly by the safe blower to blow "black stuff" into the drilled hole. And if need be he can send soporific fumes into a room to silence a dog or still a sleeper. He has an artifice for about everything except a "bugged joint," which means a place fortified with burglar alarms. These he dodges religiously. He has a "reef and fork" with which to do inside work, that is opening drawers, etcetera, and he has even forged tools that threaten the security of the "round door" the ball-like safe that is believed to be burglar proof.

There is no limit to the criminal mechanic. Loaded dice, a card shaver which enables a gambler to "shave the deck" without the victim being any the wiser; a perforator that indurates the cards so that the crooked dealer knows just what passed through his hands, and ever so much of your watching will not detect it; locks that go in pairs, one being easily opened and the other made out of one piece, that the unwary may be fleeced by the "lock trick;" straight up the line in an amazing assortment of security-destroying things to the "can opener" are all the work of one or another of these outcasts. So that there is great truth in the police assertion:

"If the makers of one-half the tools used by criminals had exerted one-half the energy it took to fashion them, in legitimate enterprise, the world would have been enriched by hundreds of useful inventions."

When you are near your police headquarters, drop in and view the "burglars' tool case." It will be worth the trip.